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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Conventional disarmament on a regional scale

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 4 December 1990, the General Assembly adopted decision 45/418 entitled "Conventional disarmament on a regional scale", in which the Assembly decided (a) to welcome the report of the Secretary-General on this question (A/45/428); (b) to invite Member States who had not yet done so to convey to the Secretary-General their views on this matter; and (c) to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Conventional disarmament on a regional scale".

2. Pursuant to paragraph (b) of the decision, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 25 January 1991, requested all Member States to communicate to him their views on this matter. To date, the Secretary-General has received replies from Chile, China, Finland and Peru. Other replies will be published as addenda to the present report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

CHILE

[Original: Spanish]

[18 July 1991]

1. The Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations wishes to point out that any initiative for conventional disarmament on a regional scale must begin with a consideration of the characteristics specific to each region. Moreover, it must be preceded by confidence-building measures, such as those contained in the opinion of the Government of Chile appearing in document A/45/428, and must be based on a commitment on the part of powers outside the region not to introduce weapons which would constitute a disturbance of regional peace and security.

2. In addition, it must be remembered that conventional disarmament on a regional scale should be a gradual process leading to a balanced reduction in the armed forces of the region concerned in accordance with the principle of minimum defence capability, since each State must guarantee its territorial integrity and the peaceful coexistence of its citizens.

3. Furthermore, the existence of non-military factors which threaten or in some way affect the governability of States and the peaceful coexistence of nations, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, the foreign debt, the steady increase in poverty and the environmental issue, are elements which must be considered in the definition of a new order of international peace and security.

4. The Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

CHINA

[Original: Chinese]

[23 May 1991]

1. China always attaches importance to conventional disarmament and holds that the drastic reduction of conventional armament should be carried out along with nuclear disarmament. Regional conventional disarmament, if carried out appropriately, can help mitigate tension and promote peace and stability in the regions concerned and have a positive bearing on other regions, as well as global efforts for peace, security and conventional disarmament. In the field of regional conventional disarmament, the focal point is Europe where high armaments concentrations exist. China welcomes the conclusion of the Agreement on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and hopes that it will be implemented as soon as possible by the countries concerned. Troops thus reduced should be disbanded and weapons, equipment and facilities thus reduced should be disposed of by means of destruction or conversion. They should be neither transferred or redeployed in other regions, nor sold to other countries.

2. Progress in regional conventional disarmament depends firstly on the specific circumstances and conditions of the region involved. In order to promote regional disarmament, both regional countries and the extraregional powers should strictly observe the United Nations Charter and the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, respect the right of States to choose, in the light of their national conditions, their own political, economic and social systems, strictly adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect each other, seek common ground while reserving differences, live in amity, treat each other as equals, have mutually beneficial cooperation, seek fair settlement of disputes by peaceful means without using or threatening to use force, practise restraint on armaments and military expenditure and not to seek an armament level that exceeds their legitimate defence requirements. In addition, States, big or small, strong or weak, are entitled to participate, on an equal footing, in consultations on and settlement of matters concerning their region. Only by so doing can the conditions for regional disarmament be created.

3. In the course of promoting the endeavour for regional conventional disarmament, full consideration should be given to the following basic principles:

- Regions where serious military confrontation and high armaments concentrations exist should take the lead in concluding and implementing agreement on drastic arms reductions, establishing a military balance at lower levels of forces and eliminating the capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action;

- Various regions should, proceeding from their specific conditions and characteristics, at the initiative and with the participation of the States concerned, reach agreement and adopt measures on regional disarmament acceptable to those States on the premise of undiminished security for all;

- Regional disarmament agreements should not affect and jeopardize the legitimate security interests of other regions and States, and should conform to the basic norms governing international relations;

- Regional disarmament agreements should include fair, reasonable, effective and practical verification measures to ensure the compliance of these agreements;

- Extraregional States should respect all regional disarmament agreements conducive to peace and security and refrain from any activities harmful to the implementation of these agreements.

4. The formulation of specific regional disarmament measures and steps should be based on the specific conditions and actual requirements of the region concerned. In this connection, there does not exist any model applicable to all regions. The measures and steps concerned may include the following aspects:

- The States concerned may firstly enhance dialogue and consultations and adopt practical measures bilaterally so as to increase confidence, reduce tension, remove conflict and strengthen security, leading, step by step, to the negotiations on and formulations of regional disarmament measures and agreements;

- Confidence-building measures and measures concerning the exchange of and openness and transparency in objective information on military matters suitable to conditions of various States of a region may be formulated and adopted through voluntary consultations so as to lay foundations for regional conventional disarmament;

- Appropriate actions in the field of conventional disarmament may be taken by the States concerned unilaterally or by agreement to ensure that their armaments are used solely for defensive purpose;

- Without compromising the legitimate defensive capabilities of various States, while fully taking into account their weapons manufacturing and production capacity, the possibility of working out specific measures concerning reasonable regulation and restriction of weapon transfers should be explored;

- In the course of regional disarmament, existing regional mechanisms should be used as much as possible and the role of United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament should be brought into play;

- Nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free from weapons of mass destruction may be established according to the actual conditions of a region through consultations and by voluntary agreement of the States concerned in the region, because this can help promote the process of regional conventional disarmament.

5. In order to create conditions for regional conventional disarmament, big extraregional powers should take the following steps:

- Nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-weapon-free zones;

- States that have deployed nuclear weapons abroad should withdraw these weapons to their own territories;

- Forces abroad should be withdrawn and military bases on foreign soil dismantled;

- The super-Powers should cease all forms of arms race and take the lead in taking disarmament actions and especially in reducing their nuclear forces and their naval and sea military forces with long-range fighting capabilities.

FINLAND

[Original: English]

[25 April 1991]

1. For Finland as a European State experience gained in Europe is a natural point of departure in deliberations concerning regional disarmament.

2. The CSCE Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Stockholm (1984-86) laid the groundwork for negotiations on arms reductions by enhancing openness and transparency in questions related to military activities in Europe.

3. The document adopted in 1990 in the CSCE negotiations on CSBMs in Vienna expands the measures agreed upon in Stockholm. The participating States agreed on an annual exchange of detailed military information on the command organizations and the formations as well as units of land and air forces. Agreement was also reached on new types of measures for risk reduction. It was further agreed that annual implementation assessment meetings will be arranged to discuss the implementation of agreed CSBMs and that a communication network between the participating States will be set up.

4. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe negotiated within the CSCE process by 22 participating States, members either of NATO or the Warsaw Pact, is of great importance to European security. The Treaty reduces the risk of surprise attack as well as the possibilities to launch large-scale military operations. Finland, though not a signatory of the Treaty, welcomes the outcome and calls for swift removal of the ratification and implementation of the Treaty.

5. Even after the CFE Treaty is implemented, considerable military power will be maintained in Europe. Therefore, Finland considers that there is still room for further reductions in conventional armed forces in Europe. Finland finds it necessary that CSBMs will be developed also in the future alongside reductions of conventional armed forces.

6. Due to political developments the negotiations on arms reductions in Europe will not, indeed cannot, continue between military alliances. Finland stresses the indivisibility of security. All European States should be able to participate in negotiations which affect all of Europe.

7. According to the Charter of Paris for a New Europe adopted at the CSCE Paris Summit in 1990, the participating States will strive for new negotiations on disarmament and confidence- and security-building open to all the 34 participating States, due to begin after the CSCE Helsinki Follow-up Meeting in 1992. This process should cover arms reductions as well as CSBMs.

8. While recognizing that regions may greatly differ in their political characteristics, Finland regards the results achieved in Europe since the mid-1970s and especially in the last few years as instructive in many respects. CSBMs, sometimes considered marginal compared to disarmament "proper", have indeed paved the way for the latter. There should be no reason why political will for such modest beginnings could not be summoned in other regions if it could be summoned in Europe, then bitterly divided into two antagonistic blocs.

9. Encouraging processes in some regions in addition to Europe, are already under way. Finland considers it indispensable that they be given every incentive to thrive.

10. The Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations avails himself of this opportunity to renew to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of his highest consideration.

PERU

[Original: Spanish]

[18 July 1991]

1. Within its foreign policy in respect of disarmament and international security, the Government of Peru attaches special importance to conventional disarmament and its relation to regional processes.

2. In recent years, Peru has given concrete demonstrations of its active participation in this area, since it is Peru that traditionally introduces the resolution on conventional disarmament on a regional scale, which is sponsored by a large number of States, and since Peru also supports other United Nations resolutions on this important aspect of the process of general and complete disarmament.

3. The Government of Peru considers that no significant progress has been made to date in the multilateral sphere as such, and therefore feels that the dynamic developments in relations between the super-Powers, as well as the new configuration in Europe, should also be reflected in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

4. It remains abundantly clear that so-called "military capabilities" are continuing to increase, engendering the recurrent phenomenon of "incremental proliferation" in various parts of the world, and that there is no sign of any definitive end to the process or of any serious intention to halt it; this situation constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

5. In the area of "new military capabilities", we should bear in mind the option relating to a kind of "refuge" which is being offered to a number of countries, including some developing countries, as a means of dealing with unfair and harmful competition, and which entails concomitant social and economic phenomena having a particular impact on third world countries.

6. Recent world developments are having a substantial and complicated impact on "collateral costs of disarmament", particularly in respect of the dismantling of the military apparatus and industries and the consequent idle capacity and diversion of human resources and related activities; this should be taken into account in evaluating and analysing the processes to be implemented in order to arrive at a global estimate of such costs.

7. In this respect, Peru will continue to develop and support a methodical, rational and global approach to the military and non-military aspects of disarmament whether or not they in any way affect the future of this process.

8. The Government of Peru believes that negotiations for the solution of the issue would provide the international community with a valuable opportunity to make progress on specific aspects of disarmament, arms control, security and development, promotion of cooperation and plans for global recovery. Such a

negotiated peace should serve as a model and a precedent for the future elaboration of an overall plan for peace and security which would be conceptually acceptable to the international community.

9. The Government of Peru also considers that progress in disarmament must respect the concept of the legitimate defence requirements of States and the particular characteristics of each region with regard to security.

10. Lastly, it should be emphasized, as on previous occasions, that Peru considers that now is the most opportune time to reopen negotiations on disarmament and to adjust them to the current international situation, so that they may become the best means of halting the arms race and, without prejudice to their global aspect, may be integrated into regional or bilateral processes, thereby furthering the goal of general and complete disarmament.